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Do Muslims Worship the Kabah?

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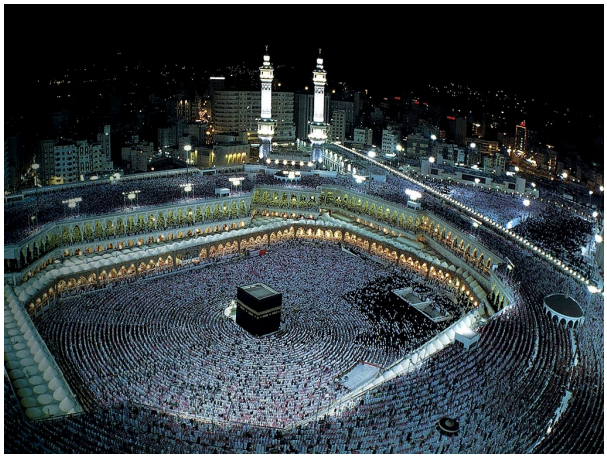
Originally posted 2020-07-09 19:22:44.

By Editorial Satff



We hear many people here and there who ask: Do Muslims Worship the Ka`bah? If not then why Muslims go to it? In, fact, this type of

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misunderstanding is raised by those who misapprehend the true status of Ka`bah in Islam. They think that Ka`bah is like their deities or idols, but it is not a deity or an idol in Islam.

We would like to declare that Muslims always adhere to the commands of Allah (Glory be to Him) and the instructions of His Messenger (peace be upon him).

Facing the direction of *Qiblah* (prayer direction) is a condition of the validity of prayer in common situations. There is no controversy on this issue. Allah the Almighty says:

> **So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer].** (Al-Baqarah 2:144)

However, there are some exceptions in this ruling according to some urgent conditions, where a person is unable to face the direction of Ka`bah, such as the prayer of fear (during a war) and non-obligatory prayer for a person traveling on a riding animal or any other means of transportation. In these cases and similar situations, facing the direction of Ka`bah is an un-obligatory issue and the prayer is valid if it was performed to any direction.

As Allah the Almighty says:

> **And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.** (Al-Baqarah 2:115)

Islam urges Muslims to face the Ka`bah during the prayer to symbolize the concept of unity among all Muslims all over the globe. If the issue is left open to everybody, everyone will be facing a different direction and this might cause disunity.

All Muslims understand that the Ka`bah is just a symbol and does not harm or benefit anyone.

Muslims also go around the Ka`bah in Hajj to symbolize the divine unity of Allah the Almighty. At certain times during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) Bilal (may Allah be pleased with) stood on the Ka`bah and gave the Adhan. If there is any kind of worship, they would not have done that.

Islam came to preach the worship of Allah the One and Alone. The message of Islam has invited people to abandon the worship of idols and deities in any form. Allah (Glory be to Him) says:

> **But they have taken besides Him gods which create nothing, while they are created, and possess not for themselves any harm or benefit and possess not [power to cause] death or life or resurrection.** (Al-Furqan 25:3)

All Messengers and Prophets were ordered by Allah the Almighty to worship Allah the One, Who has no form, shape or idol.

The Glorious Qur'an says in this regard:

And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no deity except Me, so worship Me." (Al-Anbiya' 21:25)

Muslims Worship only the Lord of Ka`bah not the Ka`bah

It is strange to label Islam with idolatry, while Islam has been characterized across its history with the principle of monotheism in all aspects of human action, including: faith, worship, dealing and actions. Since its advent until today, monotheism has been its identity just as the concept of rebirth is the distinctive feature of Hinduism.

Every Muslim in the world, whether educated or un-educated, intellectual or non-intellectual announces clearly that Allah is the One Who must be worshipped Alone and not the Ka`bah or anything else. Indeed, Muslims turn their faces to the direction of Ka`bah during the prayer because Allah (Glory be to Him) has ordered them to do so. That is why they implement the Command of Allah the Almighty in order to obey Him and worship Him. The implementation of His Orders and Commands has been regarded in Islam as the most meritorious kind of worship. Worship in Islam is not directed to Ka`bah itself rather it is directed to the Lord of Ka`abh, the Lord of the whole universe. In addition, Muslim jurists have concluded that the Muslims who live in distant places or in other countries and could not see Ka`bah in front of them during their prayer, such people do not need to face the physical building of Ka`bah directly. For such Muslims, it is enough to face the direction of Ka`bah only and their prayer is valid. This is unlike the idols of Hindus who set idols of their gods in every home and shop. Also they carry them wherever they go or travel. Hindu temples are also filled with idols and statues of their gods, while the mosques of Muslims in any country or place of the world are completely free from all kinds of images and statues.

Bayt Al-Maqdis: The First Qiblah of Muslims

It is noteworthy here that Muslims in the beginning of Islam used to turn their faces to the direction of Bayt Al-Maqdis in Jerusalem during their prayers, because the Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him) and his followers were ordered by Allah the Almighty to turn their faces to the Bayt Al-Maqdis. Thereafter, Allah (Glory be to Him) ordered them to turn their faces to the direction of Ka`bah in Makkah, since then the Muslims began turning their faces to Ka`bah implementing the Command of Allah the Almighty. Thus it has become clear that Muslims are merely bound by the orders of their Lord the Almighty. When He (Glory be to Him) ordered them to face the direction of Bayt Al-Maqdis they obeyed His Command sincerely and when they were ordered again to face the direction of Ka`bah they implemented it immediately. That is why Allah is worshipped and He is obeyed in all cases, not the Ka`bah as was misunderstood by some people.

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